

25 April 2018

Service update: Fuel Problems in the Galveston Area

Applicability: All ship owners, operators, and charterers

Recently, FOBAS has been informed of a number of vessels facing operational problems after bunkering HFO from Galveston and nearby ports in the US Gulf. Problems encountered by ships include blocked fuel filters, sticking of fuel injection pumps as well as damage to fuel pumps.

The fuels in question have been bunkered against RMG380 grade and subsequent analysis indicated that they met the specification limits of Table 2 of ISO 8217. Acid number results have been determined to be in the range 0.40mgKOH/g to 0.90mgKOH/g. Further investigation on these fuels is still ongoing but initial results from FTIR and GC-MS testing suggests the presence of certain fatty acids which should not be present in marine fuels and have been linked to sticking and damaged fuel pump components in the past.

Any contamination may be at low levels and not easily detectable without in-depth testing. However, according to the latest version of ISO8217, for the fuel to be within specification, it must be free from any material at a concentration that causes the fuel to be unacceptable for use no matter the concentration.

Until the investigation into the quality of the mentioned fuels have been completed, for any vessels bunkering in Galveston and nearby ports we recommend:

- Particular attention is paid to the terms of the bunker requisition and specifically mention that the fuel must exclude any anomalous components.
- Acid Number of the fuel is determined.
- Close attention is paid to the fuel pump and injector performance during the use of fuels bunkered from Galveston and nearby ports.

To ensure that representative samples of the fuel are obtained, it is also important that correct sampling procedures are followed and any operational problems documented.

If you require any further information about this Bulletin, please contact us at fobas@lr.org or speak to one of our consultants on +44 (0)330 414 1000 (Southampton UK), +44 (0)1642 440991 Redcar (UK), +65 3163 0888 (Singapore), +30 210 4580 874 (Greece).

Lloyd's Register and variants of it are trading names of Lloyd's Register Group Limited, its subsidiaries and affiliates. Copyright © Lloyd's Register Group Limited. 2018. A member of the Lloyd's Register group.

Lloyd's Register Group Limited, its subsidiaries and affiliates and their respective officers, employees or agents are, individually and collectively, referred to in this clause as 'Lloyd's Register'. Lloyd's Register assumes no responsibility and shall not be liable to any person for any loss, damage or expense caused by reliance on the information or advice in this document or howsoever provided, unless that person has signed a contract with the relevant Lloyd's Register entity for the provision of this information or advice and in that case any responsibility or liability is exclusively on the terms and conditions set out in that contract.